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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	*page* 3
MERVYN PEAKE: *Truths have no Separate Fires but from their Welding*	4
O This Estrangement Forms a Distance Vaster	4
Poem	5
TESSA M. SILLARS: *Single Death*	5
JOHN ORMOND THOMAS: *The Angels in the Air*	6
NICHOLAS MOORE: *Requiem*	7
RUTHVEN TODD: *A Child in the Middle Forties*	9
F. WILSON: *War and Pity*	10
DANNIE ABSE: *If the Dead Offend*	11
KENDRICK SMITHYMAN: *Lived by the Strangers*	13
W. S. GRAHAM: *At Whose Sheltering shall the Day Sea*	14
Threnody for a Ruined Landscape	14
POEMS FROM THE TURKISH OF AHMED HAŞIM	16
PATRICK ANDERSON: *Song for Waking*	17
C. BUSBY SMITH: *Flowering Currant*	19
From an Old Legend	20
ERIC NIXON: *Autumn Wood*	20
Ebb and Flow	21
MURIEL SPARK: *Invocation to a Child*	22
DEREK STANFORD: *En Route*	23

SEÁN JENNETT: *Barge Horses* page 23
JACK LINDSAY: *Fear beyond Fear* 24
ANTHONY CURTIS: *John Heath-Stubbs, A Symbolis Poet* 26
RUGGERO ORLANDO: *Eugenio Montale, translationst by* ANNE SYMONDS 31
REVIEWS 37
DEREK STANFORD: *Poetry and Living—A Questionnaire* 50

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EDITORIAL

Poetry seems to be in for a period of neglect. Only the old inveterates for whom poetry is life, the professionals who will not miss anything of value written today so that they can pass judgment on it in the pubs of Bloomsbury or the salons of Portman Square, only those determined hounds of the measured word still watch over the destinies of English poetry. *All* publishers agree that the sales of bound volumes of verse are now so low that it is more than probable that in the coming years the new and unpublished poet is going to find it extremely difficult to get a hearing. And no other plan for subsidising the expiring poet by committee or grants-in-aid will rescue good poetry. This can only be done by the constant publication of new poets by a large variety of publishers so different from each other in taste and allegiance that all sides get a hearing, some critical discussion is possible and a balance achieved. Here the B.B.C. with its half-million listeners to poetry programmes could do a great deal more than it does in a much more intelligent way. But in many ways the poet who wants his work to survive in this dreadful century is lucky. There are at least four or five magazines devoted entirely to printing his work. There are still publishers with a sufficient sense of responsibility to want to sacrifice profits made on other books to non-saleable poetry. And that should be enough for the survival of any really first class work. Remember that Gerard Manley Hopkins could count his readers on the fingers of one hand, was published long after his death, and yet had a greater influence on English poetry than any poet of the nineteenth century. Let us then take heart and continue to write —from the heart, and with hope, for coming generations of readers. Our hardships may even be beneficial, for the poet writing in solitude without hope for the present often produces work of a timeless quality. The little cliques of criticasters and weekly reviewers may lose their stranglehold, and out of the chaos of our times the real voice of poetry be heard.

MERVYN PEAKE

Truths have no Separate Fires but from their Welding

Truths have no separate fires but from their welding
Flames rise, and when the incongruous is found
Not to be so, then, if the gold's no gilding,
Great tombs take wing
From what was burial ground.

The eye, the ear, the intelligence, the spirit
Through cornucopias of living dream
Veering unburdened, find the heart inherits
The matrix through a drawing in of threads
To the bright destination of a sunbeam
That burns at stairhead,
Flowers in the gloom,
Glowers in the wine
Or where a field of bread
Sways its pale head
Creates the sudden signature and sign.

O This Estrangement Forms a Distance Vaster

O this estrangement forms a distance vaster
Than great seas and great lands
Could lay between us, though in my hands
Yours lie, that are less your hands than the plaster
Casts of your hands. Your face, made in your likeness
Floats like a ghost through its own clay from me,
Even from you—O it has left us, we
Are parted by a tract of thorn and water:
The bitter
Knowledge of failure damns us where we stand
Powerless, withdrawn, lonely and hand in hand.

Poem

He moves across the bleak, penumbral shire,
His body smouldering with long diamonds
Of silver, yellow, and of sea-green fire,
And at his heels are hungers restless hounds.

Skyline to skyline—darkness. In his hands
Nothing to hold, and in his eyes no light.
He is the harlequin of broken lands
Wandering forgotten through the martial night.

TESSA M. SILLARS

Single Death

Nothing holds the moment in suspension. And
The dark dissolves this present.
All living contradiction finds its doom
Where statements pass their flat dimension
In unshadowed space.
The strident air
Shrills with the mockery of mirrors
Reflecting backwards, and
A single singleness remains
Where two have died their partial death.
A dry-mouthed death, leaving nerves
Still strung to die their gradual
Death of deprivation.

JOHN ORMOND THOMAS

The Angels in the Air

I come with my homaging heart bared wide as pupil
For my listening blood to hear
The leaf or stone speak in a pulse or word
Shaped by the one still season
At the pin of the turning globe.
But I find their voices voiceless
And in their faces
See death's ill-hidden line spin out its web,
See that their veins of life or age,
Filled by the wrinkling, law-revoking weather,
Confide me nothing, nothing I did not know
Before the world, remade in dew's bright wonder,
Bore the return of innocence and light,
Met with the schools and pardons of the eyes
Bringing beatitudes to light much older,
Coursing from fountainheads no sun denies.

They in their calm send my glances flowering
Along the travelled light of the outer stars
First made as markers for the cries
Of Adam and the angels. Now I know no Adam
Only that I am here
By leaf and stone which show me silent death.
And still the eyes which look across my shoulder
Teach me invisible distances
Inched by a sand of stars.
Returning figures walk down my waiting gaze.
And men crowd in. Knowing no one of them
I see them stand, untouched by wind or sleet,
Moon or the sourcing sun,
Men out of miracles,
Meeting race-burning bursts of the blinding skies
Still and serene as dew, for swords lie at their feet.

NICHOLAS MOORE

Requiem

I

We cannot bear for long the dreams of the heart,
But time must change or challenge;
Until, under the eyelid flashes fire,
Circles of fire in the night,
And there you are.

You.
But, of course, it is not you,
But a dream of you, the tresses of your hair
Blown in the wind by some disconsolate shore—
And, when we look again, you are not there.

Or again, it is you I dream of,
White and pretty with love,
Your arc'd breasts, your circled
Eyes—and a mad laughter laughter laughter,
A girl running through the hoops of night,
Her hair alight,
You, you.

(But, of course, it is not you:
You are dead under the mulberry tree,
Your eyes staring through tears at me,
Each glistening drop crying, crying
'What did I do?
O darling, what did I do?')

It is not you, but a stranger.
You never speak to me,
But as I turn to stroke her hair
Or kiss her forehead patiently,
You walk suddenly through the air like a ghost,
And the street is filled with the shapes
Of your long legs,
Your strong and lovable legs.

O you,
Your legs are adorable,
And your enormous feet.
Yet it is not with them that I am walking. I am alone,
Walking, walking, walking
To atone
For the years' hatreds, for a thousand dreams on fire,
For all that I aspire to gone.

And no atonement of course is possible.
You in your arms have borne the miracle.

II

I,
But, of course, it is not I,
Who shiver here
And conjure
You 'on whose worth my despair yet walks'.
And you are here,
Real and divisible,
And the girl with her hair in flames has gone, has gone.

Or there I see you, too,
Your hair done up
Roughly above your head, in a pale
Raincoat,
In the muddy meadow,
Breathing the mountain air,
Tired, and your pale cheeks cold,
Exclaiming as the sun breaks through.

Or again, O you,
Adorable
On the green hill
In the mossy grass,
Disclosing your pale breasts to meet the sun,
Your almost-nakedness—
And then it is I see the wild ghosts run.

Or there you are:
Run panting by the river,

A goddess in flight,
The winner of all races,
There.

And here I am,
I not I,
I the hunter, you the hare
Who leap while yet I look and are not there,
Who leave me in the night to see the luminous blue
Hare jump, and not be you.

(For you are dead, my tansy, tansy O,
Oimoi, Oimoi,
Olola, Olola;
For you are gone to the sweet nest of the seamew,
For you are gone, gone,
And I, I
The glistening seabirds cry.)

Today I read the terrible newspaper:
In Greece more slaughter;
In India more slaughter;
In Indonesia more slaughter;
And in my heart
(All things that challenge thee)
I have the image of a moon,
Divided twice,
The holy melon's slice:
And there I see a red eye wink between.

RUTHVEN TODD

A Child in the Middle Forties

After long wars and passages of disaster,
Hearsay of deaths on far-off horrible islands
And under the hills of Europe, the master-
Key turns in the lock, she only understands

That she was little and far too young
To plouter in puddles where once bombs fell,
Or to go out and about, to wander among
The people who trimmed the edges of hell.

And now in a blue and party dress,
She does not think of things to come,
The world of tomorrow can never distress
Her estate as small as the nail of her thumb,

Where everything works the way it should,
And the devil is only noisy in church;
And pure mind knows of nothing but good
And the rest can go hang, or lie in the lurch,

For her laughter would make of any complaint
Something untruthful, smelling of treason,
Something disgusting and nastily quaint—
Right out of place in the holiday season.

F. WILSON

War and Pity

His death broke birds from the despicable skies,
My stretch of shame. O from the havoc of their mating
These cry down worlds where no world is, cry flesh
A wilderness, cry love a thing of hands
And built upon despair.

If these be gulls
What ocean pastures feed, what slopes their anchorage?
They come as marriage guests. What port of the soul
Spans the harsh inroad of that sea, clamps down its ring,
Burns out upon the pushing finger of the tide
Intact with passion, hangs there irrevocable?

What tracts their haunt, what lachrymose estuary
Pulsates beneath these wings, what scarecrow lea
Of morose lowland is thronged black with pity?

DANNIE ABSE

If the Dead Offend

'*She died by her own hand just after sunset.*'—From a letter.

I

What shadow in the wind, the last hour of the sunflower
flickering with pain of blackbirds and coffins
married her to the white flaming nails of Night?
Against what cross of stars, her feet chained
to the chanting ghosts, was she crucified,
her sweet name maimed forever with the buried angel?

O what was the least of the last disaster
in the wind, that turned her eyes around and new?

The laughter should have told me. I did not know
the phœnix rising from the cold fires of her breath,
the icicle of the moon pointing like a finger in her head
to the dead darkness that I too have wished for.
I did not know or hear the intruder of the wind
walking beneath the frost, carrying her to another land.

Sweet name, could my hand but return colour into
your mind, burn again the sunflower there,
and o, o, o, the mad laughter of these stars rescind.

II

That I too have wished for. Yet never at sunset,
surveying the bleeding sea rising and falling
with the huge grey feet of the drowned, had I
the courage or the ultimate despair, and so turned away
again, hearing the bird-child's bitter cry,
following the footprints of years over the desolate sands.

Finally because of fear no less than the seagulls'
perfect poise, gliding in the geometrical wind, judged I
death infantile, no less because of fear.

And all have known the violin string broken at
New Year's Eve when the bells ring lonely, or when

alone unspeakably with the bright caravans of summer,
all have wished to fall with the sunset, into the mirror
of the sea, to remain there, forever still, tragic
and beautiful, like a page.

Now down the street the big white bird whimpers
over the chimney-pots, the chlorophyll sings
in the wired ear, and the sea recedes, leaving
the beach empty of all but ghosts.

III

No less because of fear of the partial ecstasy,
the intimate terrible sadness of knowing God,—
I do not talk about possession,—but of the hint known,
the stone deciphered under the water momentarily,
and then lost again. What was this but the partial
ecstasy, the kiss revealing the feel of effete fishes,
withered flowers, skulls and smells of centuries?

Sweet name who now lies anonymous as grass, as sand,
what is our life but a thing supernatural?
I shall not make your darkness a taboo,
your silence, an awkwardness not to be expressed
in the drawing room in front of tulips.

For death is a revelation that we are alive, let us rejoice
therefore, let us rejoice. Your last cry too was an ecstasy
and then after this dying, as after sex, followed
that unaccountable sadness that we are ever to suffer.

Yes, to know of God but not to possess Him, like
loving a crazy girl, like loving a dead girl, this is
our burden whilst the black bones of the clock swivel
round. Loved but not loving, loving but not loved,
which is the greater agony?

To have lost the ability of the muscle's power,
the craft gone, the cock voiceless at dawn,
this is your similar misery, like losing God
in a crowd, like a moment squandered by a needless
conversation that no years can ever recompense.

I accept then your cold lips that I now kiss gladly,
my face over yours like a lamp,
I accept that last disaster in the wind gladly:
the dead offend no more, the laughter of the stars rescind
and the beach is beautiful with your whitening body.

Only bury her, bury her, for those whom the dead offend.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

Lived by the Strangers

Comme si cette grande colère m'avait purgé du mal, vidé d'espoir, devant cette nuit chargée de signes et d'étoiles, je m'ouvrais pour la premiere fois à la tendre indifférence du monde.—Albert Camus, 'L'Etranger.'

Lived by the strangers they cannot admit
these, poets or strangers, are most tender for
some whom condition imposed. No surrender
makes possible what was loved and no retreat
ever will open their glass gate, permit
again on branches friendly as a cloud
that one from the throng known, the signal bird
which singing once moved the child who heard.

Pursuing wishes like music or down as feathers
falling by night and soft to the waking dream
what release comes as pertinent and accepted
but the unloved face whose awkward lips stated
their conning decision kept by a close term?

Far, further than mountains their guilt cries
with a frightened turn, word turning above all:
cette grande colère m'avait purgé du mal.
Emptied of hope, before night charged with stars
they plead. Soon, as a fan closing, desire curled
fœtus or fern in them, their moods rehearse
the cruel indifferent tenderness of the world.

W. S. GRAHAM

At Whose Sheltering Shall the Day Sea

At whose sheltering shall the day sea
Captain his ships of foam to save
Them weary of air, their hair gently
Afloat above them on prongs of water?
Now, prince in the seacircling tower,
Emigrant to grief, furious seafarer swept over

The seven wounds and multiple five
Senses of drowning; he fills his voice
With land-dry prayers and the sea above.
His 'help' or 'save me' like a bird
Bore back only the stretched, whitefingered
Hand of the swelling sea and found him sheltered,

Sheltered in soon all of us to be
That memory against the scuppering rocks,
The spilling aprons of the sea.
Grief fills the voice with water, building
Ruin on the ruining land. Sheltering
In sea he breathes dry land, dry grave and dwelling.

Threnody for a Ruined Landscape

Tomorrow I have known
You and tomorrow shall be love
Always and tomorrow shall be
Love for the loveless and
For the lover tomorrow
Shall be love.

Time cannot endure for her
Who was who is shall be
Love and the swallow's
Magnificent music voiceless
In the promised fertile spring.

Time shall be in pain
On the broken stairway
Where white flowers cascade
Like a lover in spring
On the couch of the morning.

Time shall be
Relentless and renewing
The dumb matins of the swallow
Sing and sing again love
In the broken tower where
Tomorrow shall be love.

Tomorrow I have known you
Tongue deep in silence
Syllable of unspeakable beauty
Hate to bother you bother you
Swallow in the wilderness
Follow the fool who is dumb
Who is one with love
Who you shall be follow
The falling flowers for whom
Tomorrow shall be love.

The weather dreadful bitter
Broken the precipice and
Unhappy the prince
Who has known you little
Voiceless swallow crying
That tomorrow shall be love
Shall be love.

POEMS FROM THE TURKISH

Two Poems by AHMED HAŞIM

Ahmed Haşim was one of the leaders of the Symbolist Movement in Modern Turkish Poetry. He was a member of the Serveti Fünün School, which laid the foundations for modern Turkish poetry, at the beginning of this century. Two of his other poems were included in Mr. Patmore's Anthology, *The Star and the Crescent.*

The Black Birds

The birds,
Whose spirit is nourished by the twilight
And from blood,
Are perched on the purple reeds
And on the ruby of the water.
The sun,
Like a decapitated head,
Lies on the horizon.
They have eaten it sadly,
And in silence.
Now they are refreshed.

The Staircase

Slowly, slowly, you will mount its steps,
The train of your dress
Spangled with the colour of the sun.
And, sometimes, you will look at the sky
And weep tears.
The waters will become golden.
Your face becoming paler and paler
From moment to moment.

Look at the empurpling air!
The evening falls.

Bending towards the earth, the roses are bleeding,
Bleeding without stop.
The nightingales of blood
Like flames,
Remain transfixed to the branches.
Is it a fire that consumes the waters?
Why does the marble
Resemble burnished bronze?
A mysterious language is there
That invades the soul.

Look at the empurpling air!
The evening falls.

(Translated by DEREK PATMORE)

PATRICK ANDERSON

Song for Waking

O wake, my long girl, from your curled sleep
and kissed lull and cradle of milk
for over the hedgerows morning tightens its silk
and throws its larks, and over the burning
lawns the bells are breaking matutinal
toll and call
down walls of wet down canyons of dewfall.

O wake, wake to the butterfly on the toothglass
and the bee on the sill and the smell
of gardens filtered through the curtains' volatile
light and the thrushes' and sparrows' endless
flicker and bubble of flight. O come
up through lace
to the sun strong on the pane and the sung prism.

Too long you have lain a-bed, have lain too well
in shadowy parallels of grey and green
with the streaming weed in its twilight medium
while, under you, your son plunged vertical
down to the pit of sleep, and over you one
sleepwalked the pale
eyelid waves and the brows of the mild ocean.

Yet should I tell you to wake which is always breaking
in the round womb and the honeycomb home to make
another day with a scream or a handshake
and often indeed rain falling, storm clouds shaking
over—O girl between a dream and a tomb
should I not tell you to keep
halcyon here, where it is nearer to heaven?

Wake slowly then and not too soon too soon
desert that island littoral of your eyes'
bird brightened canopies and the drawn-down rose
closing your sight, but in sunshine and perfume
loiter the sands of a marvellous Hawaii
with a camera-eye
and a tourist's smile and O let them lie to you

perpetual paradise for against the sky
Sleep smokes its dreams and voodoo, in hills of fur
are the savage systems of the interior
and here in the port another slavery
will blow a ship's siren soon. O laze and lie
a little while more my girl
for—overboard with miraculous pyjama,
to the breaking of leis—tourists must wake and sail!

C. BUSBY SMITH

Flowering Currant

Paradise tree with phœnix birds in your hair,
doves, songs, and spirits of dead saints,
white candles burning their incense
under the pale eye-moon,
bird-songs, angels,
wires, bright jewels,
garlands of coral beads,
bright flecks
of sacrificial blood, images of ewe-lambs.
Under your wonder, I, martyr to beauty lie.

I may see nothing but your white veins,
eruptions of carmine words, smiles,
tears and supplicating hands,
myrrh, bitter odours
and many pains.
In the cup
of your green and waving,
murmuring and agate-silent
branches, and intricate lovely convolutions,
I drown as the phœnix screams,
and on each stretched, volcanic branch
thorns sprout and stab me with their loveliness.

The Jonquil scented wind is a song in your leaves,
its ochre fingers on your veena-strings
of shrill and twittering green,
dance in the sunlight
riotously splitting
the bright magenta air
to a dazzle of jewels. To this
paradise tree of worship, flowering nature turns;
on the hem of its delicate robe
lets fall its prayers of blossom and bright fruits
under the benevolent Krishna eye of love.

From an Old Legend

Her blind eyes are starred with tears. She has heard
the story of the sun, and for long her hands have known
the rough salt blades of marsh-grass. The grotesque squawk
of gull had invaded her white mind. Now she follows
the curve of the light on the cliff with her eyes' shadow,
until at last lost and frightened in space it falls
to a dark cave where lashes cover it.

She has heard the moon and nightingale battle in the dark,
and in her yellow dream has been the light
of a particular star, glittering and luminous.
But she has heard legends of a bitter and angry sun
and felt the shrivelled meadow under her feet,
and sand and stones like upturned blades of knives,
and in a violent throbbing summer once she found
Icarus, her lover, shattered on the red rocks.

ERIC NIXON

Autumn Wood

O soft this is the golden funeral
the skeleton-threaded vermilion pall
spread with the veins of silence
over the paths of leaves at sunset
fretted with faces
and the incredible lace of death.

Tread lightly on this visionary wreath
where sunlight and shadow interweave
living and dying in a masque of leaves
for here the rich wood grieves
the fallen angels in the copse of sky
the amber corpses folding their death-frail wings
luminous as the feathers of sunset.

Ebb and Flow

ebb and flow
black water in the silent phial of sky
point and counterpoint of fire;
the strings of the universe
vibrate with fluid of desire
love on the arcs of stars
darkness in the web of the eye

ebb and flow
the rivers in the heart and mind
wave where the visions glow
beyond this dream and the cross of stars
beyond the zero of time and the wind
lonely in the lonely skin of space
O bubble body O human face

ebb and flow
the brittle godhead in the petal of the rose
sunset and moonset in the sycamore
the myth of angels ripe in the golden cherry
the simple eye believing a world grows
between the planetary grave and the fevered core
where life renews its tongue of fire
repeating the fury stolen from the sun

ebb and flow
the firework spurts in the glass of air
descent and end in its graph of flame;
the human heart acknowledges despair within:
without all bends and breaks
in instellar motion
of dark and darker vastness of creation.

MURIEL SPARK

Invocation to a Child

For Robin

Clad in your boyhood, fair and early you run,
a minister of fable from strange house to house
but naming none your home. That origin

has lost its moment and you, swift to interpret
the hollow claim from caverns of birth, replace
their primitive angels with the desperate

heroes who tread your nights; greater your sky
than the womb's walls and more marvellous
than its inviolate crypt your jeopardy.

But History is a jealous mother. Know
you are the load she is fierce to possess.
My love, she will not be delivered of you.

will not contrive your genesis nor travail
unless you force an exodus, unless
you rise in her, enraged, and of your will

strike her enfolding fingers from your limbs,
emerging from her vault a Lazarus
summoned by incommunicable dreams.

DEREK STANFORD

En Route

Now, more than ever,
when the twilight checks
the will to action and the rational move;
now, when the lonely snow profoundly lures
the mind to its immaculate nirvana,
now, most of all, old scars of absence ache.

The train moves on.
Blue chimney-smoke ascends
towards the widening sky's electric bay.

Trapped in an azure dream of ice, I pray
for love's finality;
not this alien fate.

SEÁN JENNETT

Barge Horses

O you bright beauties, bending to the haul,
burly barge horses, that along the towing path
heave and hold, heave and hold
all the burdensome day, as though the pith
and sap of life lay in servitude of the flesh;
rich thewed, rock fast, anchored to the load,
knowing your way, not needing lash nor goad
or oath, what prize do you pull for, what flush
of desire at day's end pays all? Is a warm stall
and measure of oats enough to make worth while
your labour? God knows his creatures' hearts
cannot be bound with ropes or shafted to great carts,
he understands and cares; but I, who have
no help in hand, can only send my love.

JACK LINDSAY

Fear Beyond Fear

I count your faces in the april distance,
the serious dusk, and have no heart for tangles,
correct doubts and eyelids blown askance
in a disequilibrium of angles.

I have loved; I love; my hate is part of it
in the warm squirrel-dark. No more I know
under the shabby oak exactly planted
at forest-centre with a ledge of violets
forgotten ages ago.

Suppose the wish is rationally granted,
suppose the broken edges of the token fit,
suppose. Who knows?
The door opens: what can we do but enter?
What can we do?

Then the long tale is told; its echo dies.
We wait to hear the key turned in old rust.
The prisons open. See, in flickering dust
the scarred man stands and shrinks with reddened eyes
and hopes that no one notices. He feels
the rut of the road unkind against his toes;
earth and the mountains of light are falling falling:
The man is homeless. Cold the duskwind blows.
What shall we do then, when our hopes come true?

What shall we do then, in the terrible hour
of triumph, when the mountains fall and hands
are weightless and worn eyes must learn to meet
the candid answer of the meadow-flower?
when all the strength that burst the final bonds
hardens, and words are twisted things
despised by any silly bird that sings.
I am afraid of him whom we must save,
the broken man who riveted his heart
with stubborn courage in the clanging grave.

The man who saves us, the embittered man
who sacrificed his loins for love.

We must defeat an enemy, dispossess
the obvious and malingering oppressor.
How can we measure else the wrongs he worked
obscurely on our flesh, and sift apart
the unnecessary fears, and then, with songs
win the last battle, in that rifted heart?

What names will death assume, when, veils withdrawn,
we clasp the unknown lover in the dawn
and all the birds are screaming and we face
that pang of boundless happiness? what fear
will quicken the absolute embrace? what stress
still summon the incalculable grace?

We must find out new words for death and birth
in that full quiet. No more questions asked,
no answers given; only a love of earth
a love of woman and man:
                frail perfect things
clean past our touch. The green of silences
and your fallen hair O love: then something sings
and peace is folded up, my hopeless youth
returns with desert-wisdom and a flask
of virgins milk, and on the threshold dies.
No more my doves across the salt must roam.

Then only may my songs come home
with clear mild bells and gilded flowerfaces
in casual and demoniac dance of truth
bringing no pity but a friendly solace
which leans past tears and fears with flirted wings
towards the unpolluted springs.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS: A SYMBOLIST POET

It is the image of the wanderer, the exile, the disinherited one ('el desdichado' of de Nerval's sonnet) that has dominated the poetry of John Heath-Stubbs. His poem sequence, 'The Heart's Forest,' contains a passage which recalls a sense of isolation as being present in the poet's earliest memories:

> *To that south country where the solitude*
> *Of field and forest can bring back again*
> *Only the sufferings of childhood*
> *When I was least troubled when most alone,*

and in 'The Divided Ways' there is a vivid picture of the poet himself advancing into that imaginative world which it is his lot to explore:

> *There was a forest, and faces known in childhood*
> *Rose unexpected from the mirrored pools;*
> *The trees had hands to clutch my velvet shoulders,*
> *And birds of fever sang among the branches:*
> *Till the dark vine-boughs, breaking as I seized them,*
> *And dripping blood, cried out with my own voice:*
> *'I also have known thirst, and the wanderer's terror!'*

Throughout his work a series of poems, written at different times, and with probably no conscious apprehension of their thematic unity, is centred about the imaginative realization of one aspect of this archetypal figure of the exile: the stone-age woman who is forced to grind at the mill of and bear sons among an unkindred people, Ben Jonson's Mosca remembering his ephemeral power, now with his 'back blistered under the lash, and tar-sizzle,' the drowned man 'cut at by oyster-shells', the beast howling to the cold full moon, the beggar, the mad girl and, in a lighter mood, the half-humorous characters of the Gothic ballads. All these spring from the one immensely fruitful source of inspiration. And in this line of development 'The Heart's Forest' and 'The Divided Ways' are critical poems, for, in composing them, mythology, literature and history—fields which in his poetry Mr. Heath-Stubbs has shown himself to possess a wide range of knowledge—are as subject matter abandoned at the need to find a direct poetic expression for a personal disaster. These two poems are the result of a marriage between poetry and the experience of the poet—a rare but exquisite occurrence in this poet's work.

In sonnet XIV of 'The Heart's Forest' there appears the image of a large English country house which is crumbling to ruin at the onslaught of invaders and the ceaseless beating of rain. Unlike the house symbol in an earlier poem 'Illusion', which was the warm, sunlit, spacious house of childhood, where 'children, moon-solemn and sun-haired, have drifted hand-in-hand between the borders,' here the house is transmuted to become a symbol of the poet's own integrity. He *is* the house beset by 'rebel troopers', those external forces against which the self, its pride and its ancestry are defenceless. This poem serves as a good illustration of Mr. Heath-Stubbs' poetic method at its most successful—an imagined historical event, in this case from the Civil War, is made to symbolize an actual event in the poet's personal history, and the inner symbolical meaning of the poem is suspended until its climax which occurs in the last two lines.

It was the attempt to write vital symbolist poetry that emerged as the common aim of those who contributed to the anthology *Eight Oxford Poets* (1941) in which Mr. Heath-Stubbs' work first appeared. Sidney Keyes wrote in the preface to that book: 'We seem to share a horror at the world's predicament, together with the feeling that we cannot save ourselves without some kind of spiritual readjustment, though the nature of that readjustment may take widely differing forms. In technique there is also some similarity between us; we are . . . *Romantic* writers, though by that I mean little more than that our greatest fault is a tendency to floridity; and that we have, on the whole, little sympathy with the Audenian school of poets?' Three, out of the eight contributors, to this anthology—Keith Douglas, Drummond Allison and Keyes himself were killed during the war, and except for John Heath-Stubbs none of the others have yet established a poetic reputation. He is, therefore, in the position of being perhaps the sole surviving member of a promising school of young poets whose work, especially that of Porter, Keyes and himself, was mutually inspiring. Of the group he was also its most extreme member, its most accomplished technician, and the one who, in his poetic personality, seemed to take the least positive share in its 'horror at the world's predicament'.

All these qualities were apparent in his first book, *Wounded Thammuz* (1942), a formal elegy which has as its theme the legend of the death and rebirth of Babylonian Thammuz. This story is used as a point of departure from which to investigate the poetic consciousness of spiritual death and regeneration. Both in its objective, and its uncompromising use of traditional language and metre.

together with the display of floral and natural imagery which it contains, *Wounded Thammuz* represents not so much a reaction against as an apparent unawareness of the poetic experiments and discoveries of the previous decade. The first section of the poem, 'Autumn Rite,' opens in the epic manner with the poet himself announcing his purpose:

> *This is that dying season when the dead*
> *Thicken the air, out of the still-born night*
> *Wandering with yellow leaves, drifting with thin-*
> *Spun webs of spider-silk; now should be said*
> *In the old way, for them, some litany, some rite.*
> *I have no strength, but yet I will begin.*

It is a contrast between the world of the dead and the Dionysiac power of the living, the Centaur figures, who have the strength of Nietzchean supermen, which is the thematic material of this section. The individual poems do alternate roughly between a consciousness of birth and of death until both are resolved in the poem beginning 'A Voice as of the Wind, a Voice out of the Whirlwind'. And then, finally, the section closes with the reappearance of the figure of the poet, symbolizing traditional poetry:

> *So sang the poet, softly by the hearth*
> *Of an old house, with embers raked together,*
> *Warming himself by that uncertain glow.*
> *(He who had served proud kings of the old earth—*
> *But their bright livery was all for show,*
> *And pitiful against the winter weather)*
> *Then rose, and went on through the quiet snow.*

The wild power of the imagination and its 'inordinate pursuit' is balanced by the next part, 'Midwinter Valley,' which evokes the cold of ice and frost, and where the most poignant images are those of the intellect.

The total impression is one of tenuous frailty, of ghostly abstract music and of skulls lying in the valley unconscious of the centaurs on the hills.

The final section of the poem 'Spring Pastoral' attempts to reconcile through images of rebirth these two preceding themes and also to force the elegy from the mythical plane on which it has so far existed to a consciousness of the mechanisation of modern life by those great beasts which,

Champ like centaurs, with their shining steel flanks,
In their splendid pride and insolent lust of creation
Singing.

This section is, indeed, the only sustained example of a social as distinct from a spiritual conscience becoming manifest in Mr. Heath-Stubbs poetry. It contains also, at its close, a scene of crucifixion:

What is this, dark against the setting sun?
A crooked tree, a vine whose iron tendrils
Are twisted to toothed wheels and snake-sheathed chains.
And for fruit, a Man hanging.

The whole elegy is one which gives moments of great æsthetic pleasure. Its command of language and ability to submit with a seemingly effortless grace to the discipline of a variety of metrical systems made *Wounded Thammuz* a notable achievement for a first book. Its faults of abstruseness and lack of power (in parts of the last section) to sustain a faithful relevance to its double tensions of birth and death, imagination and intelligence do, one feels, derive from the magnitude of its objective.

It was perhaps as a reaction against 'the tendency to floridity' symptomised in *Wounded Thammuz* by an excessive use of hyphenated adjectives, that Mr. Heath-Stubbs began to develop the technique of constructing his poems from a concentration on the symbolical significance of a character of history or literature, and setting the consequent commentary or monologue in a definite historical perspective, usually with an extraordinary accuracy of detail and effects. Such poems as 'Edward the Confessor', 'An Heroic Epistle', 'Tibullus Gone to War', 'St. Sylvester on the Capitol', 'Maria Ægyptiaca' and, on a grander scale, 'Alexandria', all contain lines whose function is merely to create period atmosphere, and the skill with which this is done without weakening the emotional impact or destroying the formal unity of the poem has perhaps so far gone unnoticed by critics.

Wounded Thammuz was succeeded in 1943 by *Beauty and the Beast*, and in 1945 by *The Divided Ways*. In varying moods of humour, rhetoric and lyricism these two books represent, one feels, an exhaustion of the 'exiled hero' theme. But in them one can also discern the seeds of future development. The long poem 'Elegy' celebrates a relationship (again essentially one of lonely childhood) between the poet and a dead ancestor. It includes one passage of detached self-criticism which proves him to be aware of his central failing:

I need your courage for my different problems—
To make words take their places, nor neglect
The impingement on the world, which justifies
The reverie in the garden, and the dream
Of fairy countries in the enchanted hill.

It is the failure of his poetry to impinge sufficiently upon the world that has been the charge so far directed against him. And it is indeed true that Mr. Heath-Stubbs does not emerge in his work as an 'observer of life'. One does not find there those glimpses of contemporary life placed contrapuntally beside moments which embody the fundamental rhythms of existence such as—if such a comparison may be made—the public house scene in *The Waste Land* or the scenes of the London Underground in *The Four Quartets*. But this does not mean that in terms of the legendary, literary and historical persona around which his poems are built Mr. Heath-Stubbs is unable to realize an æsthetic experience as human, as evocative and as emotionally valid as the work of any of the numerous realist poets among his immediate contemporaries. Throughout his work there are examples of this: the sense of a return to the womb which is present in 'Tannhauser'; the series of poems on those who have devoted their lives to the service of an ideal or to another—'Leporello', 'St. Cecilia', 'Edward the Confessor' and 'Iphigenia in Tauris', the poem where this conception of self-sacrifice reaches its most complete expression; the relationship with the ancient world and especially with Virgil which is established in the sequence 'The False Return' and in 'All Souls' Night', and finally the more specifically religious poems 'Elijah', 'For the Nativity', 'Epithalamium', 'Through the dear Night of Him who walked the waves' and 'Alexandria'. Their impingement upon life is oblique rather than direct. It was perhaps originally something read rather than something observed which urged them into being. None of them, however, yield their true meaning if they are simply taken at their face value as literary poems. They are intended, one feels, to hint at a meaning which may be apprehended by the imagination, but which cannot be translated by the intellect. Because of this I have called Mr. Heath-Stubbs a symbolist poet, for it is the essential characteristic of symbolist poetry that it precisely does not say what it means, or, in other words—those of Mallarmé—'To name is to destroy'.

ANTHONY CURTIS

EUGENIO MONTALE

Eugenio Montale was born in Genoa fifty-one years ago; today he lives in Florence. These Who's Who-like details are not merely biographical; they are also a guide to his poetry: Montale's style is the style of a man of his age, with a wide experience of events already distant, and yet with a keen capacity to observe the new; from his native city he has learned his love of the sea, courage in the teeth of the wind, a seafaring simplicity of speech and a belief that an enchanted voyage is possible though the rocks be cruel and perilous; from the city in which he lives has come help for that frame of mind which stands permanently balanced between real and ideal, between to be and not to be, life and death—for the Etruscans were the great protagonists of the livingness of death, and the blazon of the Tuscan Renascence was the urge to show all things in their entirety.

In trying to assess Montale's place in poetry, I should like the assistance of an over-easy comparison: the French Symbolists resembled their painting contemporaries, the Impressionists. As the latter wished to forget perspective, line and volume to dedicate themselves entirely to one problem, the life of light, so the former fell in love with the music of words, missing the relation between abstract and concrete, physical and metaphysical, partly because they did not care, partly out of sheer annoyance that their materials, words and sentences, were so misguided as to have a meaning. Then however, among French painters, Cézanne succeeded in the reconquest of volumes without cutting himself off from the discoveries of Manet, and among the poets, the Surrealists have tried again to trace the line, or the shadow which divides the physical from the metaphysical, thus evolving from the Poe of Baudelaire, and Mallarmé. But Italian poetry, like English, never possessed such an influential trio as Baudelaire, Verlaine and Mallarmé, neither their thesis nor the synthesis that followed them, and in Italy, thirty years ago, everything was still to be done: the Symbolist message had still to be learned, and at the same time to be superseded.

Consciously or unconsciously, the inspiration of Montale reveals just this difficulty, and his work shows us how often he has managed to solve it. He published his first volume of poems, *Ossi di seppia* ('Cuttlebones') in 1925, in which were collected the fruits of the preceding five years' writing:

Erano questi,
riviere, i voti del fanciullo antico
che accanto ad una rósa balaustrata
lentamente moriva sorridendo . . .
Oggi torno
a voi più forte, o è inganno, ben che il cuore
par sciogliersi in ricordi lieti—e atroci.

Translation by ANNE SYMONDS

And they were these
O shores, the pledges of the child of long ago
Who leaning near the balustraded rose
So gradually slow and smiling died. . . .
Today he turns
To you now stronger—or is it lies?—although the heart
May loose itself in memories happy—horrible.

Italian metre is much more limited than English, and the difference between accented and unaccented syllable is not so strong; by far its most important factor is the number of syllables in each line, and the hendecasyllable is by far the most important line. All Italian epic and most of the lyric poetry too, has been dominated by the hendecasyllable. Second in order of importance is the seven-syllable line. And to these, following the example of Giovanni Pascoli, but far more perfectly, Eugenio Montale has added the eight-syllable line which is the usual measure for light, popular verse. In this sort of poetry, however, the line is always accented on the first syllable. Montale never does this and the line somehow gains an unusual nobility of sound.

Montale makes frequent use of internal rhyme and assonance, whether his verse is rhyming or not, and he succeeds in this way in endowing the hendecasyllable with unexpected echoes. These in their turn necessitate cæsura, so that many of his verses sound like arrangements of shorter ones, brought together and overlapping:

*Cigo*la la *carrucola del pozzo*
l'*acqua sa*le alla *luce e vi si fonde.*
Trema un ricor*do nel* ricol*mo secchio*
nel puro cerchio un'immagine ride.
Accosto il volto a evanescenti labbri:
si deforma il passato, si fa vecchio,
appartiene ad un altro . . .
Ah che già stride

*la ruota, ti ridona all'*atro *fondo,*
visione, una distanza *ci* divide.

Translation by ANNE SYMONDS

Creaking goes the wheel-crank of the water-well
And water mounts to light and with it blends away.
A memory trembles in the brimful bucket,
In the limpid circle laughs an image.
Now my face draws closer to the fading lips,
The past deforms itself, grows old and gray,
Belongs unto another. . . .
with what a grate
The wheel returns you, vision, to the darkling depth
And what a distance keeps us separate.

Cerchio in the fourth line makes a false rhyme with *secchio* and *vecchio; ti ridona* in the last but one with *stride* and *divide.* These may not be very striking to the English ear, but to the Italian accustomed to a poetry which eschews all pauses and where coalescence between vowels flows with an almost unbroken regularity, they contribute a remarkable enrichment to a metre, captive within the rigidity of its number of syllables.

In *Le Occasioni* ('Opportunities'), which was published in 1939 and included the work of the preceding ten years, Montale showed that he had become an incomparable master of such musical ornament, sober, austere, but constant and profound:

Il passo che proviene
dalla serra sì lieve
non è felpato dalla neve, è ancora
tua vita, sangue tuo nelle mie vene.

Translation by ANNE SYMONDS

The footfall which is going
From the greenhouse, softly so
It is not velveted with snow, and still
Your life, your blood within my veins is flowing.

Here are two seven-syllable verses followed by two hendecasyllables, in fact the two most common lines in Italian poetry; but the third verse, thanks to its internal rhyme with the second, commits the heresy of nine syllables. This is made even more deliberate by *proviene* being echoed in *lieve,* and from the inverted rhyme *neve* and *vene; passo* and *felpato* have also the echo of a rhyme.

Montale's footfall compares with those famous ones of Valéry:

Personne pure, ombre divine
Qu'ils sont doux, tes pas retenus!
Dieux! . . tous les dons que je devine
Viennent a moi sur ces pieds nus!

The orthodox semi-Alexandrines of the Frenchman are as elaborate as the verses of the Italian: an alliteration in 'p's in the first verse, the internal false rhyme of *doux* with *Dieux*, the triple alliteration of 'd's in the third. And the idea is so much the same that it were matter for marvel if there had been no conscious or unconscious remembrance on Montale's part. The last verse of Valéry's poem is '*Et mon coeur n'était que vos pas*': how near this is to the footfall in Montale's which is still 'your life, your blood within my veins'. But there is a difference: Montale would never put three exclamation marks in one quatrain; and he guards himself carefully from saying whether he finds the footfall sweet or painful, welcome or unwelcome; he relates, he does not confess. It is for the reader to understand or to guess what it is the poet feels before his evocation. Valéry, on the other hand, invites one without hesitation to know what even he does not yet know or feel, and he lets his metaphysic be taken for granted: the one who comes is a 'personne pure', an 'ombre divine'. Montale's metaphysic is always closely bound to physical life: the footfall comes from the greenhouse, softly indeed, but obviously not velveted with snow, and the one who comes is merged into the poet, by means of a transfusion unequivocally real. And it is here that we understand the significance of the fact, that at Florence and at Genoa, no Mallarmé ever descended to redeem sounds from their weight of common clay.

But we know too that a footfall is unlikely to be made of flesh and blood, unless the poet has been subjected to the experience, or at least to the demands of Symbolism.

Among Montale's latest poems the dominant symbol is incarnated with an ever-growing definiteness—on the model of Dante and Petrarch—in a woman. She is the 'guide' in abstract, like the woman of the footsteps in Valéry's poem, but she is also a person made up of recognizable characteristics; we know that a lock of hair falls over her forehead, and that she has the habit of throwing it back with a toss of the head; we are told by a word here and there even of her earrings and bracelets. Much more objective than the Symbolists, Montale uses far fewer adjectives in his descriptions; sometimes so great is his fear that they may sound obvious, shoved in

to fill up a space, that he revives the obsolete, daringly placing them next to nouns of current usage. *Interito* is the example in the poem printed here, a complete archaism which has been translated *stockstill*. But Montale's effects are always well and orderly matched, with a classical neatness: sight, sound and touch do not overlap, do not dilute themselves in one another—a common contemporary fault in all languages. Sometimes he seems almost to fight to prevent his verses becoming too fluent, too sighing: he breaks them with unexpected words and rhythms, till the lyric seems hammered out of wrought-iron.

He shares with the Symbolists and Surrealists aspiration to the skies. But his religion is more difficult than theirs; in his journey towards the height, the earth always remains, menacing him with the disaster of a fall, perhaps to make him lose the right way in some dark wood. . . .

RUGGERO ORLANDO

A VOICE IS COME WITH THE MOORHENS

Translation from Eugenio Montale by ANNE SYMONDS

Now as I turn, looking back, the travelled road is longer
than this uncertain track for goats, which leads me
whither we must all dissolve away like wax
and fair and flowery reeds no more have power to soothe
    the heart,
but only twigs, the blood that lies in cemeteries,
behold you, forth from the dark
that held you, father, tall towards the blaze,
bare of shawl and cover, to the creaking quiver
heralding at rise of sun
the miner's barges, great with heavy cargo
half-submerged, coal-black upon the swelling waves.

The shadow which attends me
to your grave, forever vigilant
now hovers over some memorial marble,
loftily her forehead tosses from itself
the childish tress of hair, thus laying bare those
ardent eyes and stern-lined brows,
this shadow's substance is no more than yours
so long ensepulchred, that first weak rays

of day are able to transfix it, lively
butterflies go skimming through, the sensitive
mimosa can brush it by and not shrink back.

The faithful shadow and the silent one now
rising, she who has poured out her inner fire
and he, whom age-long years beyond time's hold
(real years indeed for me) have disembodied,
they speak to one another words,which I stockstill
upon the precinct cannot hear, she perhaps
will find again the form in which there burnt
the love of Him, not of herself, which moved her,
the other stands dismayed, afraid the phantom
of remembrance which warns him to his sons
will be extinguished by the first rash movement.

—My thoughts have been for you. I have remembered
all for all. Return to those free heavens now
which will transfigure you. Is it these cliffs which
tempt you still? Oh, yes, the beating of the waves
is still the same, the sea which joined my shores to
you, so long before the time when I took flight,
has not dissolved, I do indeed remember them,
my beaches, yet with the moorhens I am come
to loose you from the hold of yours. Memory
is no sin when it is put to use. But after,
it becomes the sloth of moles, mere abjectness

which grows like fungus on itself . . .—
the wind of day
confounds the living shadow and the other,
loth still, into a state of half and half which drives
my hands away and breaks my breath upon the
swelling place, upon the hollow ground, the grave
which circles round the catch-spring of remembrance.
And thus is revelation, which precedes the
link to images, to words, a sense obscure
and reminiscent, the undwelt-in emptiness
where we have sojourned, which awaits the time
to fill itself with us, to find us once again.

POETICAL BOTANY

GEOFFREY GRIGSON, *The Harp of Æolus* (Routledge, 15s.).

A great deal of water has flowed under the bridge since those late 'thirties when Mr. Grigson was the bright young editor of *New Verse*, and a thorn in the side of the middlebrows. To re-read the numbers of *New Verse* to-day is already to evoke a slightly nostalgic sense of period, and Mr. Grigson himself has become an expert in the capitalization of similar feelings of nostalgia. He has retired to a spiritual week-end cottage, and writes delightfully on beauty and botany, on the art, literature and fashion of the past.

Georgianism *redivivus?* No, not quite. Mr. Grigson has a great deal more intelligence, taste, and genuine learning than any Georgian week-ender. He is a connoisseur, and writes in these thirteen essays with real distinction. Of his criticism of painting I am not qualified to speak, and perhaps, writing in the present periodical, I may be excused that admission. Our concern is with poetry, and in this field Mr. Grigson shows that he has the capacity of a really excellent critic, with a sensitive appreciation, a wide historical perspective, and meticulous scholarship. His essay on William Barnes not only draws due attention to the merits of that neglected Victorian, but show his organic relationship to the whole tradition of English poetry. The paradox is that Barnes, writing in a local peasant dialect, and of the restricted themes provided by the traditional pattern of village life, was, nevertheless, one of the least provincial minds in the whole of Victorian England. Another poet, the eighteenth century William Diaper, is Mr. Grigson's own discovery; and though the quotations here cited from this interesting writer do not convince me that Diaper is as good as Mr. Grigson seems to think, he may well be excused his partiality. There is more than mere entertainment, too, to be gained from his tracing of the history of those two typical symbols of the Romantics, the Upas Tree and the Æolian Harp.

Nevertheless, Mr. Grigson's attitude to Romanticism, and to the imagination in general, has the ambivalence of his favourite period, the late eighteenth century. Romanticism is patronized for the thrill it provides, for a touch of the bizarre; but let the artist beware if he begins to take his Romantic vision too seriously. If it becomes violent or disturbing, it arouses in Mr. Grigson an almost paranoiac opposition.

That is the true reason, I suspect, why he does not like Constable.

But his real fury is awakened when he is confronted with Romantic genius, not dead and stuffed and under a glass shade, but alive and kicking in the contemporary world. The last of these essays, 'How much me now your acrobatics amaze', is devoted to a fierce attack on various contemporaries—Mr. George Barker (a line of whose verse provides the title), Miss Sitwell, and, more especially, Mr. Dylan Thomas. It is the kind of negative criticism which is never ultimately of much value, but it is worth examining for the light it throws on the psychology of Mr. Grigson, and of the dilettante in all ages. Only a wilful desire at all costs not to allow this poetry to come through to one could produce such charges against Mr. Thomas's verse as that it is formless, uncontrolled, and has no unit but the single line. For it should be obvious, at least by now, that Mr. Thomas is, in his own way, an extremely disciplined and formal poet, with a quite exceptional control of technique, especially of complex stanza-forms. Among his technical devices, incidentally, (as Mr. Tambimuttu has pointed out), is the Welsh *cynghanedd*, or consonental cross-alliteration, whose use Mr. Grigson himself notes in Barnes.

In this essay Mr. Grigson only shows how far he has moved away from the stream of development of poetic sensibility in our age. It would be a great pity if so sensitive and intelligent a writer were aspiring to fill the chair left vacant by the death of the late James Agate.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

A POET AT THE CROSS ROADS

TERENCE TILLER, *Unarm, Eros* (Hogarth Press, 5s.).

Unarm, Eros, is Mr. Tiller's third book and his most disappointing—not because it is less good than either of the first two, but because somewhere in the perspective of Mr. Tiller's poetic evolution the development of personality that might have been expected has mysteriously slid away. What previously were only words, remain just words. The dazzle of a glittering imagery has grown dulled, more and more *voulu*, where it should have increased its range and grown more natural. This book should have established Mr. Tiller's maturity and arrival as a serious poet; but, despite its increased clarity or even because of it, it emphasises only a fluttering cleverness of technique and a failure of these thirty odd poems to add up to anything.

Why is this? Mr. Tiller himself is aware of some of the reasons.

He writes in 'Lecturing to Troops' in Tripoli:

The strangeness holds them: a new planet's uniform,
grasped like the frilly pin-ups in their tent
—something without the urgency of hate and harm,
Something forgotten.
But that is not what I meant:
I should have been the miles that made them
innocent,
and something natural as the sun
from the beginning to everyone
though Harry and Larry and Len are gone.

And earlier in the same poem he writes:

Waiting for my announcement, I feel neat and shy,
foreign before their curious helplessness,
innocence bought by action, like the sea's amnesty:
all my clean cleverness is tiny, is a loss. . . .

This is frank and honest writing, where it seems to me Mr. Tiller has penetrated to the roots of his own predicament—a feeling of ineffectuality despite his surface abilities. And more than anything it seems to be due to a lack of conviction, to his facility to write gracefully round a theme without really even entering it. So it is that despite his efforts to vary the slightly worn but individual formula of his technique, a monotony descends on his poetry, simply because all of it seems to be accomplishment and very little of it necessity. This effect Mr. Tiller increases by blurring the first delicate impress of his imagery through a repetition of his most fetching words—mask, glass, nakedness, flower, flesh, weather, world. Where one hoped for a whole human personality growing from the poetry, Mr. Tiller has produced simply the poems as isolated things in themselves—charming, full of grace and of a metaphysical fluidity that is reminiscent of Donne, but still without cohesion or impact.

But having expressed one's disappointment, it is only fair to add that there are many beauties in this new book, some almost completely successful poems like 'Camels' or 'Flying to Tripoli', and everywhere a certain distinction of phrase and approach that puts Mr. Tiller into the class where his poetry ought to mean much more than it does. That is the real disappointment, and one can only wait and see whether Mr. Tiller has reached his early high noon as a writer or whether the catch that will release the really important poetry is still to be sprung.

ALAN ROSS

HOW MANY TIMES!

E. E. CUMMINGS, *One Times One* (Horizon, 8s. 6d.).

This is an expensive book for a book of poetry, rather loosely put together between warpable boards. But this is Horizon's latest offering to the culture of our times. They introduce Mr. Cummings for the first time to England, forgetting the previous introductory volume published by *Contemporary Prose and Poetry* before the war; however, we all like to be first with the good things, even if we aren't.

Mr. Cummings is a funny man. He is the Dr. Alex Comfort of America. He is a moralist, a lover of peace, a lover of love, and a hater of most of the world. This is rude, I know, and ideology is supposed to have nothing to do with poetry; but then Mr. Cummings is rude, too, and the one plain and ordinary thing about his poetry, discounting all the tricks, is its propaganda. Mr. Cummings wants to be free. He is oppressed by all that oppresses Dr. Alex C., and he wants to be free of all these things, and to be free to love where he will. He is a sentimentalist.

Luckily he is also a satirist of no mean order, and he can turn a neat epigram:

mr u will not be missed
who as an anthologist
sold the many on the few
not excluding mr u.

You will notice this would be no less neat if it had proper capitals and proper punctuation, but Mr. Cummings is a funny man, and he likes to do sleight-of-hand with typography, even when there is no organic reason for it. These tricks are meant to assist you to read it or see the shape of his poems on the page. They do assist to disguise his sentimentalism, but in his best poems—and these are very good—they get in the way.

a politician is an arse upon
which everyone has sat except a man

is a small poem which well exemplifies Mr. Cummings' moral weltanschauung. He hates the State, too, and for him the Soviet Union is Totalitarian. What he loves is love, romantic love, physical love, and

now i love you and you love me

books can't teach you anything, but buds can, spring can. This cosy,

somewhat eclectic philosophy his poems enunciate time and again. Curiously enough they are very much the sentiments one also finds in the popular songs of American dance music.

Mr. Cummings is at his best when he is not too serious. He can't help fooling even when he's serious, but then the sentimentality of what he is being serious about obtrudes uncomfortably and no number of tricks can disguise it. When he is less serious, he can be excellent, as in

o by the by
has anybody seen
little you-i
who stood on a green
hill and threw
his wish at blue, etc.

One Times One is one of Mr. Cummings' best single books, and there are some of his best satirical poems in it, such as that which ends:

Without a heart the animal
is very very kind
so kind it wouldn't like a soul
and couldn't use a mind,

but it is a pity he should be introduced without, among others, 'here is little Effie's head/whose brains are made of gingerbread', 'Humanity i love you', 'Jimmie's got a goil', 'my father moved through dooms of love', 'mr youse needn't be so spry', 'a man who had fallen among thieves', 'i sing of Olaf glad and big/whose warmest heart recoiled at war:/a conscientious object-or', and the poem which ends

much kissed, by loving relatives
well fed, and fully photographed
the son of man goes forth to war
with trumpets clap and syphilis.

This volume is gifted with a pompous introduction by Lloyd Frankenberg, which gives a good deal of information and ascribes the quality arrived at by Cummings to his 'gift of emotional interpenetration'! A good many poems not in the book are tantalisingly mentioned, and no word critical of Mr. Cummings is breathed.

But read Mr. Cummings for yourself; it would take more space than this to tell you all about him!

NICHOLAS MOORE

The Prometheus Bound of Æschylus, translated by REX WARNER (John Lane, 6s.); MAURICE JAMES CRAIG, *Some Way for Reason* (Heinemann, 6s.); HERBERT CORBY, *Time in a Blue Prison* (Fortune Press, 7s. 6d.); GLORIA KOMAI, *Never Despair of Gardens* (Sylvan Press, 3s. 6d.); W. J. STRACHAN, *Moments of Time* (Sylvan Press, 6s.); JAMES TURNER, *The Alien Wood* (C.U.P., 2s. 6d.); THEODORE NICHOLL, *The Immortal Ease;* GLADYS HAINES, *Pines on the Hill;* RACHAEL BATES, *Songs from a Lake;* OLGA LEVERTOFF, *Rage of Days* (Hutchinson, 6s.).

I cannot here go into the significance and place of Prometheus. A gigantic figure, echoed by Milton's Satan and Samson, and reaching his apotheosis in Shelley, he dominates romantic and pre-romantic literature, and every new presentation of his original appearace in literature is welcome. Mr. Warner is a brilliant writer and a sound scholar. It is therefore doubly unfortunate that he is no poet. He has here to compete not only with the orotund pastiche of writers like Prof. Murray, but with Shelley and the echoes of Shelley which the original contains. In his rugged mood, trying to present plausibly the implausibility of Greek dialogue, he is frankly at sea—

> *Now, where you are, behave outrageously and steal*
> *and give to things of a day prerogatives of gods! . . .*
> *You need forethought yourself if you would find a way*
> *to break out into freedom from this work of art.*

This is Kelly's Keys to the Classics—the lyrical passages which retain their dignity suffer from their proximity to Shelley, but an unmetrically transmogrified Shelley—

> *Fear no danger. It is a troop of friends*
> *which in quick rivalry*
> *of wing has reached this rock, and hardly won*
> *by prayer the father's mind to let us come.*
> *Swift-speeding breezes have borne me. . . .*

Faultless in itself, it invites comparisons which it cannot sustain.

It is a great pleasure to see a book by Craig. The best and the most unpublicized of the contemporary Irish writers, he is a thoroughly competent student of his own limitations, never going outside them, excellent within them, and, when he intends to be, genuinely and unforcedly witty. I have seen better poems by him than those in this book, though the epigrams do give some idea of

his quality. I wish he would publish more. Corby, in his second book, is as competent as ever: sometimes he has a little of Craig's diction and sourness—to the jazz trumpeter

I think I understand you playing
out of the dark of the disc, I think
I know the meaning of what you're saying
from your heart and the heart of the drink.

Some of these poems of Corby's are pompous or immature and should have been weeded out, but he is unfortunate in his publisher, as there is much which one would have liked to see in a more discriminating edition. He is thoughtful, forceful, often musical, but obsessed in a way which weakens rather than strengthening what he has to say. The frustrations of uniform are a theme which has been productive from Owen to Keidrych Rhys, but there comes a point in Corby's book when one wonders why, if he could dramatize comradeship and death in action in this strident key, he was so browned off with the R.A.F., and if he felt the whole thing as moronic and murderous as he implies, why didn't he do anything about it? The guilt-complexes of ex-bombers and ex-storm troopers are not poetry, because they are never 'recollected in tranquillity' and are invariably hag-ridden by the vision of an artistically and humanly valid disobedience which might have been. But this does not mean, for all the malaise of this book, that I shall not look forward most cordially to Corby's next.

Gloria Komai has a quiet, very well controlled and usually effective manner, rather like Victoria Sackville-West's: light music but good light music, mixed with some abysmal sentimentalities. I think from her observant moments that the gush is on the way out, and though I can think of a good many critics who will howl at the sound of her, I rather doubt if they will be justified in doing so in two or three years' time. My own impression is that the poetic gadgets, lavender, bees, heart-throbs and Patience Strong, are nothing to do with Miss Komai's real perceptions and will be replaced by something which already appears in some poems and is much more worth-while—

You do not know
That underground uneasily we sleep,
Pierced by presentiment, sharp startled cry
Of wind awaking echo. Blind and sure
We feel our wary inches. Syllables

Knock indistinct—the sparrow housekeeping.
We persevere as some pursue a star.

If I say she sometimes resembles Miss West, I mean she will do, or may do, when she finds spring weather less exciting.

Mr. Strachan

would be ruthless with words,
Cut away the growth they have lately made.

So would I. Mr. Turner has found that

There is hemlock in the woods
and the soothing syrup of belladonna.

—the first few pages of his book make me wish to write 'R.aa. 1 fl. oz. Rep. s.o.s.', but this would be a drastic method with a writer in whom, unlike Mr. Strachan, there seems to be *something* which justifies the use of paper. There is an innocence which is effective, and he sometimes reaches it.

The four Hutchinson books (misleadingly boosted as United Nations prize winners, since by all accounts the United Nations are Messrs. Hutchinson) are of a piece. L'Académie ne couronne que les imbéciles—it is rather astounding to find one poet here (Miss Bates) who has written three lines of genuine poetry—

The hills in the distance
Are rumours of song
In a land without music;

the rest, and the others, the usual defective noise-to-signal ratio, the maudlin gushing over bees and breeze, the unreformed poeticism, I hand over, beak, lights and liver, to the Poetry Society. By all accounts its new masters would know better than to publish them.

ALEX COMFORT

VERNON WATKINS, *Ballad of the Mari Lwyd* (Second edition, Faber, 7s. 6d.); JOYCE CAREY, *The Drunken Sailor* (Joseph, 6s.); MARGIAD EVANS, *Poems from Obscurity* (Dakers, 5s.); RUDOLF NASSAUER, *Poems* (Methuen, 6s.); JOHN SINGER, *Storm and Monument* (MacLellan, 5s.); GUY KELLY, *The War of the Little Jersey Cows* (Fortune, 5s.).

It is an extraordinary experience to find among six books of verse received for review none which are ludicrous or worthless and two of rare quality. Granted that Vernon Watkins' *Ballad of the Mari Lwyd* first appeared several years ago, and has since

been succeeded by another, slightly disappointing volume, it is yet pleasant to note a second edition of a collection of such lucid and delicate poetry. The translations of German verse which Mr. Watkins has published from time to time have invariably proved to be the best available: reading again such poems as 'The Mummy', 'Yeats' Tower', 'Two Decisions' and 'Portrait of a Friend', it is easy to understand why this should be so.

While *The Ballad of the Mari Lwyd* itself has indeed some of the impact usually ascribed to an epic, Mr. Carey's poem, which is called an epic, has not. That may be so because one writer is a poet capable of handling a large theme without diffuseness, and the other a novelist dabbling in verse and lacking the technical equipment to avoid verbosity and repetitiveness. Mr. Carey's Sailor, who is descended from the Flying Dutchman as well as the Ancient Mariner, rails in fine, hereditary autocratical manner at all he should; his strangely submissive crew contains precisely those men whom one would have believed either to have wrested the helm from him or to have given him good advice. One is left with the inescapable feeling that Mr. Carey had fitted his theme to a list of rhymes for a given number of words made between novels, and, on the other side, a few well-written seascapes.

Miss Margiad Evans, another novelist, writes gentle poems when describing things she has seen. Here there is no attempt at grand orchestration or filling large canvasses, but even so, the drawing of morals (a habit common to versifying novelists, perhaps) causes whimsy to break in with overwhelming frequency in the tiniest of poems. One does not doubt the sincerity of Miss Evans' emotions, but one's sympathy is not aroused so easily any more by 'snowdrops hanging their orphan heads', or the 'lilybloom which has drunk a bee'. As she puts it to the 'Sky Lark':

> *All has been said of you, my little bird,*
> *Long, long ago . . .*

There is no harm in remembering what one has read. Mr. Nassauer has read Yeats, Rilke and Eliot and remembers them all, and Dylan Thomas he remembers too well. But one can still notice the better poets behind the verbiage and the pile of images. Mr. Nassauer is, as yet, too conscious of his poeticising; his multitude of artifices, one suspects, cover little originality of thought. Occasionally, though, as in the first part of 'Poem XIII', one must acknowledge the existence of someone trying to do more than write in the fashion.

Man in a swirl of grief, screaming for warmth.
Hugging the weeping plateau, hugging his hope.
(But quietly, in the recessed heart, the wordless language.)

Mr. Singer, contemplation after the phrenetic spleen, sums himself up. Too many poems, too many words, too much noise: this first impression conveyed by his new volume is eventually replaced by respect for an author who hollers because part of him cannot overcome the habit of trying to make himself listened to above the street-corner din, and of trying to tell you what's good for you, and who ceases to be bombastic whenever the remainder of him realizes that he is not a street-urchin any longer, if ever he was one, and that soap-box oratory was never any good in poetry. In this way, what is lugubrious and stale in 'Cities are People' becomes serious and good in 'Stepney Green'; and what is merely hammy in 'Poetry for Tomorrow' becomes guileless and somewhat moving in 'Burns Monument'. If at least half the poems had not been included this would have been a book well above the average.

There are sixteen poems in *The War of the Little Jersey Cows*, which do not seem nearly enough from a new poet of enviable talent. In his foreword, Mr. Kelly blithely acknowledges his indebtedness to William Saroyan for the sound of the title, and to George Scurfield, Nicholas Moore, George Barker, Dorothy Parker, and Yeats, and he would probably not mind the addition of a few more names. The admission in itself is original enough, but even more so is the fact that Mr. Kelly's lines corrosively reveal a poet of sufficient stature to enable him to overlook such a small matter as originality-for-its-own-sake.

So far as I am aware, no advertisements and no reviews of this book have appeared, and if any more reviews should appear, they will probably belittle it by calling it a collection of parodies and funny verses. It is much more than that. True, Mr. Kelly leaves it to the reader to draw his own conclusions, but beneath the smooth, light surface of the title-poem, 'Rocky Comfort', 'Speculation', 'The Death of James Joyce', or, for that matter, all the other poems, lies an amazing awareness of the complexities which beset us. On the other hand, there is perhaps nothing of the kind lying there. Which does not make the slightest difference to the fact that this is the only *entertaining* collection of poems I have read for a seemingly endless time.

ERNST SIGLER

DEREK STANFORD, *Music for Statues* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 5s.); MAURICE JAMES CRAIG, *Some Way for Reason* (Heinemann, 6s.).

Even for those who have been reading Derek Stanford's isolated poems in reviews and miscellanies for some years past with growing interest, his first volume, *Music for Statues*, is a surprisingly satisfying collection. The quality of the poems it contains is consistently good, and Stanford has selected them with a remarkable care. Indeed, care and neatness of execution, the absence of unnecessary harshnesses of technique, are among the first things one notices about his work.

Derek Stanford, I think, is more genuinely permeated with the romantic spirit than any of the other younger poets writing today. The links with Keats and the 'nineties are clear, in the choice of imagery as well as in the nostalgia which is the prevalent mood of the poems; yet, despite occasional archaicisms of wording, their general effect is essentially personal and contemporary. Derek Stanford is no imitator of the nineteenth century romantics; he has merely returned, like so many of us, to their landscape of the mind.

His poems have a strongly visual character; they present the mind, not with abstractions, but with almost scenic compositions of feeling, pre-Raphaelite in colour and clarity.

> *Autumn's fan-painting of the afternoon*
> *hung a frieze of flowers from the lawn's blue misty edge.*
> *Still on their mast-firm stalks the sun-spot blossoms*
> *were warm as pineapples in a drunk man's dream—*
> *ramparts of ripeness—and tawny-weeping trees*
> *were beautiful titians with ruined cliffs of hair.*

Stanford's imagery is always strong in impact, combined with a sensitive manipulation of his language, and his poems, rich though they are in implication, carry an essential simplicity which makes a clear turning away from the tortuous technique and the game of private allusions beloved of the 'thirties. He is one of the few younger poets of genuine individuality.

The transition from Stanford's romantic poems to the neo-Augustanism of Maurice James Craig's *Some Way for Reason* is abrupt, and not wholly pleasing. Mr. Craig's verse is always clever, but often trivial, and gives the impression of a well-played intellectual parlour game.

In a serious mood, his work is slight and, at best, charming.

Now that an early frost
Crinkles the crackling leaves
Down at the lake's edge,
The earth in an iron ridge
Holds hard, no longer keeps
A print where she has past.

His more satirical verses are at times amusing, but one is aware in them of all that recent decline of Irish humour from the great tradition of Congreve and Goldsmith, Swift and Wilde. There is, indeed, an echo, a very thin echo of Swift, but it is a Swift deprived of his devastating irony. It is surely a low ebb of discrimination that considers such a poem as this worth preserving beyond the magazine stage:

Run over by an ambulance?
Your case might well be worse,
For many a man has been by chance
Run over by a hearse.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

(By an oversight *Some Way for Reason* is also reviewed in this issue by another of our reviewers. We hope the author and publishers will take it as a compliment that two distinguished critics were both anxious to do the book justice and our readers will forgive us for presenting the same dish twice. EDITOR.)

THE HOUR BOWS DOWN

RAINER MARIA RILKE: *Poems from the Book of Hours.* German text with English translation and introduction by Babette Deutsch (Vision Press, 4s. 6d.)

'How the hour bows down, it touches me . . .' It is the mortality of our mortal day: the germ of death at the source of life, of jealousy at the source of love, of cruelty at the source of beauty which bows down and touches the poet. Something is becoming, and it is in the immediacy of its happening that Rilke interprets it. The dying bows down to the living, and the bowing down is both a giving and a beseeching. Death comes with the offering of itself to the living. The poet is chosen for this hour that he might receive the offering in himself, that the dying might live in him and he in the dying. He is stirred to a full awareness of his creative power: I feel with every sense; I have the power; I

lay hold on the plastic day. Until now 'no thing was complete, but waited, hushed, unfulfilled'.

There is nothing too small, but my tenderness paints
it large on a background of gold,
and I prize it . . .

This is significant. Not only has man lost his primal harmony with the world of things, but things themselves have suffered loss because of man's dark inheritance. Yet 'all life is LIVED' and God lives it; and seedlike God waits in every thing to give Himself greatly in what is great. But why wait? His hands 'form and circumscribe the shapes that are to come'; has He not the power to lift up the mean and give it greatness?

Aloud you said: to live, and low: to die,
and you repeated tirelessly: to be.
And yet there was no death till murder came.
Then through your perfect circles ran a rent . . .

No fiat, no law, no judgment can heal the rent. God waits the coming of a man who will in himself receive the giving of this first death, man's dark inheritance, not as a curse, but as an offering to be lifted up. This is Rilke's vision.

Rilke does not dwell upon the fear of death, but in searching into its significance for man, he touches upon a deeper fear: lest God should remain seedlike waiting and things remain unfulfilled. 'What will you do God, when I die?' he asks. 'You lose your meaning, losing me. . . . I am afraid.' The answer is: Nothing; until the Hour, heavy with mortality, bows down again to touch a man and to receive its immortality at the giving of the living of a poet.

Life, death; jealousy, love; cruelty, beauty: these are more violent in their opposition than mere contraries. The poet is the 'dark pause' between them.

I am the rest between two notes
which, struck together, sound discordantly,
because death's note would claim a higher key.
But in that dark pause, trembling, the notes meet
harmonious
and the song continues sweet.

Imagination is the life of all that lives, and in the poet's living things are fulfilled and man begins his life anew.

E. F. F. Hill

It was, I believe, the philosopher Collingwood who maintained that the first approach to the truth lay in the seeker's capacity to ask the appropriate relevant questions.

If this be so, I am left with certain doubts as to how far my questions were 'right' or 'wrong'; an opinion which some of my poet-correspondents have done their very best to foster. Asking for answers, I often received not replies but rejoinders, hoots, and hecklings. 'Off-side', I was told at every other turn, 'Out of Court', 'Without bearing', 'Quite beside the point'.

Well, apart from the fun provided by these linesmen, I think we may say that the multiplicity of the poet's reactions, as well as their answers, establishes one point at least: namely, that the process of poetry—its conception, gestation, and bringing-forth—is clearly not a monistic matter, and that the muses are hydra-headed.

Another factor which powerfully emerges (whether or not we accepted it before) is that poetry is reached by no one-way street; that no time-table, guide-book or map can take us to it.

Apart, however, from the varied lights which the diverse answers throw upon these questions, they are valuable also in that they serve to illuminate the minds of those who offer them. Now since these minds are the minds of poets—'endowed', as Wordsworth proudly claims, 'with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness . . . than are supposed to be common among mankind'—the relevance of their most personal statements, concerning the kinship of poetry and living, is surely not, I should think, to be questioned. It is true that Mr. Ernst Sigler assured me that the answers I received 'would be as relevant to poetry as a gossip-column is to life', and that Mr. John Waller maintained that 'a poet, if sincere, would answer as a person rather than as a poet'. Why this should be so, though, I fail to see. Presupposing that Mr. Sigler answers in his capacity as poet, and not in the rôle of gossip-columnist, I regret I cannot permit him his point. Secondly, in the case of Mr. John Waller, it would seem he suggests an antithesis between the poet and the person—a vague and abstract dichotomy of natures—which actual living appears to disprove. Why, after all, should not the poet, as well as the person, answer sincerely; or are we to infer that sincerity is a quality alien to the former? And when is the poet a person and *vice versa?*

Since the multifarious nature of these answers excludes the possibility of any summing-up whose object should be the semblance of

unity, I have therefore thought it best to present six sets of these answers to the questionnaire complete, and draw this paper brains-trust to its close with a composite set made up of answers by correspondents hitherto unrepresented.

In conclusion, I should like to thank both those groups of contributors whose answers are printed in their entirety and those whose answers I have had to select. To the latter I tender my apologies as well, with the editorial plea of 'no more space'.

DEREK STANFORD

1. What way of life do you think most conducive to the writing of poetry: the ascetic or the sensual?
2. Do you consider the married or the unmarried state most advantageous to composition?
3. Which do you think most favourable: the solitary or gregarious existence?
4. Do you think the poet's companions should be intellectual or ordinary-minded people?
5. Should the poet attempt to participate in the pastimes of the masses; such as music-halls, boxing and football matches, billiards, darts, and four-ale bars?
6. Should he cultivate the tough's or the æsthete's attitude to life?
7. Should the poet be politically minded?
8. Which do you consider best for the poet: outdoor or sedentary occupation of leisure?
9. Which do you think the most favourable environment: that of the country or that of the town?
10. Do you think the study of other arts conducive to that of poetry?
11. Do you think that a secondary profession is compatible with the calling of poetry? If so, should this be connected with or divorced from the literary profession?
12. What level of income do you consider necessary to the exercise of non-commercial verse-writing?

1. Both. Take asceticism as rejection, sensuality as acceptance: one has to reject some things if one's acceptance of anything is to be real. Pure sensuality would be a completely passive state. Pure asceticism would be a rejection of everything, a refusal of experience. Nobody refuses experience, nobody accepts all experience passively. We all choose. The shaping of a poem is an ascetic act (it involves painful rejections), but the material of a poem, images and feelings, is sensual. So the shaping of our own lives involves a series of ascetic acts, a series of painful rejections, but the material of our lives is sensual. If we want to relate our feelings to each other, we must be ascetic; it is as if lots of jigsaw puzzles were jumbled together, and working out one puzzle we must throw aside, for the moment, the bits from others that don't fit. (So, writing a poem, we may reject the sonorous line, the brilliant image, that comes spontaneously, but that shatters the mould.) On the other hand, if we want to have any puzzles to play with at all, we must accept *some* of our feelings: otherwise, we have a power of relation, and nothing to relate; if we throw out all the bits of all the jigsaw puzzles, we are left with an empty nursery. That might become a cell of contemplation, but it might also become the swept and garnished room of our own interior emptiness. When we have solved a puzzle we have a feeling of emptiness (I have always that feeling after writing a poem); when we have a puzzle still to solve we have a feeling of confusion. Add, to correct the metaphor, that life is one, that we play the game usually on a high level, where each completed puzzle represents an episode in one unfinished story, and may give us clues to puzzles still uncompleted. After many rejections, we may find that nothing really important has been rejected in the end. The poet, like everybody else, is perpetually struggling to make a significant shape out of 'a shifting change, a broken bundle of mirrors': his effort, perpetually collapsing, is perpetually renewed. His poems are small models of that struggle. Let him resemble the athlete in whom sensuality, the pride and splendour of the body, and ascesis, the discipline that shapes that pride and splendour, are completely fused.

2. Marriage can mean a relation between two people reaching out to completeness. As such, it obviously enlarges the poet's human scale. He will write with more depth. Marriage can mean other things: a struggle for power between two people, opposed in spirit, but cruelly tied by economic or sexual need; or a cushioning of life, the relaxing of two once vital individuals into dull, self-flattering mutual complaisance. It is a serious commitment, not a romantic excursion; a matter on the moral side of realistic adjustments, on

the natural side of a slow growth of common attitudes and habits. Many poets seem better fitted for occasional brief romantic affairs against a background of more durable sentimental friendships.

3. Both, for the poet (today, especially, when his theme must be the human condition) should know men and cities, should be at home in any alert and cultivated company, should enjoy gossip, argument, and parties; nevertheless, he should be able to retreat unobtrusively when he wants to. London is a suitable place for a poet to live in, for there he can have all the company he wants, and also all the loneliness.

4. How far is this a workable distinction? Let us say I have been giving a lecture in some working men's club and am meeting some poets for a drink afterwards. The ordinary-minded man, getting hold of a real, live poet, has asked me about the poet's attitude: to my intellectual friends I am not 'the poet' but 'George', and they know all about my attitudes anyway. Like any other vaguely cohesive group, they will be talking their own shop: X's new job, Y's new mistress. Z's new flat. I think we are all pretty ordinary-minded in many ways, but also that, as intellectuals, we are likely to rouse the ordinary-minded man's quite vigorous intellectual curiosity. But in so far as the distinction does hold with any sharpness, the answer again is obviously: both.

5. What the masses like is not a matter of mass decision (there are no Trafalgar Square meetings about it) but of the statistical average of individual or family choice within th field of what is locally available. The poet, like the individual member of the masses, when he is out to enjoy himself, should consider what he really enjoys. He ought not to be self-conscious and dutiful about his pleasures; if he is, and if the masses know about it, they will consider him as an even odder fish than he really is. I like bars, for instance, because I like drinking and talking to people in a noisy, smoky, cheery atmosphere, and so do other poets who like bars, and so do the famous masses, too.

6. Neither. The words 'tough' and 'æsthete' suggest figures in a *Punch* drawing, a bruiser with a cauliflower ear, and a weedy figure with a velveteen jacket and a floppy bow-tie. One doesn't want to resemble either of these zanies. The question, however, might mean, 'Should the poet be hard or sensitive, should he cultivate character or personality?' The answer then is, 'Both'. Sensitivity without hardness, personality without character, are not really pleasant: the poet ought not to be a sort of octopus, all tentacles and no bony structure. He shouldn't be soft and squelchy. Nor, on the other hand, should he be a mere stolid block. He ought probably to have

in his mind some ideal of human excellence—some modern equivalent of the 'honnete homme' or the 'gentleman and scholar'—but that ideal must embody both taste and conduct, it must not divorce and distort these as the ideals of the tough and the æsthete do. I don't want my friends to think of me as a tough or an æsthete, but as an amusing companion and a good fellow.

7. It is stupid to ignore politics, fatal to swallow any political creed whole. Politicians are not really wiser or better than oneself. They have to put up more of a bluff front, but suffer from just as many gnawing inner doubts. It is the inner doubts, chiefly, that make them aggressive. They cannot discuss these either with their colleagues, or they are being defeatist, or with their opponents, or they are being treacherous. One of the jobs of a poet, probably, is to air such doubts. He should not allow himself to be bullied and harassed into accepting false dilemmas: accepting the main planks of both platforms, he should stand for order *and* liberty, progress *and* tradition, social solidarity *and* individual initiative, expert opinion *and* popular pressure, firm leadership *and* radical criticism. He can allow himself certain old-fashioned prejudices—for instance, against dossiers, the use of torture, official falsifications of truth, persecution of minorities, starvation of children, global war, abstract egalitarianism, bloody-mindedness, and the atom bomb.

8. Occasional country walks are good for the liver and the eyes, soothing to the nerves; but today, for the poet, man is more important than nature, and his main leisure occupation should be talking and listening (probably in a sedentary posture, for that is more comfortable) to his fellow men.

9. The town, because the theme of poetry today must be man, not nature; but as many week-ends in country cottages as possible, so that London won't grow stale for him, and so that he will be able to come again and again to Oxford Street or the Tottenham Court Road with a thrill of rediscovery: the shabbiness, the intimacy, the queer sense of home.

10. The *theory* of music can throw, I think, a great light on many of the problems of poetic composition: *looking at* paintings can do a great deal to enlarge one's store of poetic material. But I do not think the poet should *listen* to too much music, and I think most of the *theory* of painting is irrelevant to poetry. A poem is a composition moving in time, with repetitions and variations, like a piece of music—the *structure* (not the effect) of poetry is more or less musical; on the other hand, the *detail* of a poem is much more like the detail of painting. A poet who knows a great deal about the theory of painting, like Mr. Grigson, has brilliant detail,

but his poems do not move properly. Robert Bridges, who soaked himself in music, has poems wonderful for structure and movement which are spoiled because their detail is trite and dull.

11. A secondary profession is more or less necessary if the poet is going to eat. I think it makes for a more unified life if that profession *is* connected with literature (publishing, broadcasting, teaching, even high-grade journalism); and I don't see why poets shouldn't today, as in the past, aim at being all-round men of letters.

12. For a single person perhaps four hundred and fifty pounds a year, for a married couple from seven to eight hundred pounds a year. If married, one shouldn't be ashamed to let one's wife work, till babies come. Nor should one be ashamed to accept meals, drinks, hospitality, and general largesse on the strength of one's status as a poet, nor to become occasionally a burden on one's friends. The poet's job is to get the best poetic use out of himself, while the machine is still working. He should not aim at security and should let his old age take care of itself. While he works best in circumstances of reasonable comfort, he should always prefer poverty and independence to the sort of job that will give him safety at the expense of his feeling of integrity.

NICHOLAS MOORE

1. Neither. For the ordinary man there is no opposition between the two.

2. It doesn't matter a bit, but everybody needs a more or less stable background, particularly anybody whose business it is to think. But people differ as to the exact type of background they like.

3. A poet perhaps needs more uninterrupted solitude than most people, but this, too, he shares with others whose profession it is to think. But a railway carriage is a very good place for writing poetry, particularly a restaurant car, provided no one is talking to you or in too insistent a voice to each other.

4. Few people are ordinary-minded, and of these there are probably as many among intellectuals as among others. Your companions should be people you like; not people whose brains you want to pick.

5. The masses don't have much past; they have a future. Personally it's cricket, jazz, dancing, gardening and the pictures—but, if it was the dogs, well, it would be the dogs!

6. Neither. His own.

7. It doesn't matter a damn—as a poet; as a person, it would be well for him to have at least a minimum knowledge of what is

going on in the world. He might well know about Marx. There are disadvantages in being too far up in the the air or down the drain for anyone; for a poet no less than others.

8. It is important that everyone should occupy their leisure in a way that really pleases them.

9. I prefer, as far as possible, the advantages of both. But to most of your questions there is no answer. The most favourable environment for a person is the one that suits him best; and some people are suited best by towns, others by country. Being a poet hasn't much to do with it. Of course, it is more difficult to keep away from literary pesterers in towns, especially in London. On the other hand, it is more difficult to see people you do want to see, if you live miles from anywhere.

10. Of course, the study of poetry is most conducive to that of poetry. It is a mistake to consider that a study of or proficiency in any other arts qualifies one as a poet. Quite good painters, musicians, etc., can't even write a reasonably literate paragraph in prose, let alone poetry. But there is no reason why a poet should not be interested in other arts. He might, though, just as well be interested in anything else.

11. Yes. It doesn't matter. It may be more difficult to keep one's integrity and judgment while pursuing a literary profession which does not have the standards one would wish. But one's integrity as a poet ultimately depends on one's integrity as a person. Anything can corrupt, if one is corruptible. But it is not desirable that a poet should have a job that leaves him so tired, or with so little time, that he cannot properly pursue the interests that go to make his poetry.

12. A thousand a year; or five hundred for the unmarried. It should be borne in mind (as your questionnaire in some respects fails to do) that a poet is no different from anybody else; accordingly he, too, may wish to get married, have children, etc. As a poet, he will earn very little; though some poets write novels, criticism, biographies, detective stories, invent questionnaires, and pursue other subsidiary activities out of which they make a good thing. It is true that money and comfort corrupt; but in opposition to the popular idea of starving geniuses, etc., I consider a stable background is essential for a poet, if he is to achieve very much. The instability of the world is itself a sufficient distraction; a 'struggle to live' may well distract or pervert him altogether. Of course, each individual will have different requirements as far as his personal and economic stability is concerned. What is important is that he should have sufficient to allow him to concentrate efficiently on his real interests, and to make the most of himself as a poet.

ALEX COMFORT

1. The sensual. Asceticism is not a way of life—it is a symptom.
2. What an idiotic question—it manifestly depends on the writer, though if he is mentally normal it is unlikely he will want to dispense with sexual intercourse, and that can only be conducted responsibly on a monogamic basis, with or without dog-licence.
3. It depends on the poet.
4. Anyone except intellectuals who call themselves such.
5. Yes, if he enjoys them. Not as a matter of duty.
6. Neither.
7. Yes.
8. Whichever he prefers.
9. Whichever he finds more stimulating—in present-day society neither can very well be his home, though the country is possibly less desocialised. If he lives exclusively in the country he cannot interpret every aspect of his age, but he may not wish to.
10. Yes.
11. Yes, it can be either.
12. Sufficient to live on without anxiety or privilege, preferably got by self-respecting hard work.

TOM SCOTT

In the first place, no two poets are likely to have the same requirements, but accepting the abstract convention of 'the poet', I would reply as follows:

1. The answer to this is quite simply—both. The poet is a person who must make free of both worlds. He is inspired by sensual experience, but the impulse of writing, of formalizing, is an ascetic impulse to dominate and control the delirium of sensuous experience. Every good poet is necessarily a sensualist and an ascetic.

2. This is the poet's greatest problem as a human being. It involves a duality of allegiance—to family and to his work—which, since he has no economic social status, no cash value, can be a serious problem. But he is no different from other people than any specialist is. The life of love is as necessary—or more necessary—to him as to others. There is too much bullshit talked about 'the artist'. It is time to lay the ghost of the star-haloed genius murdered by T.B. and want in a garret. It is time to say poets and poetry flourish in the ordinary soil of moderate comfort and spiritual fulfilment. The trouble is that the world still values cash as the authoritative currency, and mere science more than art; and poets want to help

their children to do what they want to do as much as other people. His day is yet to come: the age of art is not yet; but it is near.

3. The solitary. Every poet is a solitary by definition. But there must be people, friendship, and love. 'Where three or four are gathered together, I will be there. . . .' There must be varieties of people, and occasional gregariousness. Even occasional immersion in crowds; but crowds, because of his incorrigible personalism and particularism, drowns the poet in too much experience.

4. No two poets can get on well together. So long as they are not other poets, let his friends be as many and as various as possible, so long as they are real people. Let them be 'ordinary', for ordinary people are as necessary to him as air: but let them be intelligent.

5. Nothing so wilful. That's as phoney as the attempt of certain upper-class writers of the 'thirties to get to heaven on the worker's ticket. Let him go to Sunday School if he really wants to.

6. In my experience, both, as a necessary response to life. You are always a feeling, sensitive person, and therefore you try to reduce the pain of living to manageable proportions.

7. He should not be closely concerned with politics, but he should have enough grounding in theory and political reality to enable him to keep a weather eye on political trends. He must know which of a bad bunch are on the side of the new, the living, the creative, and are therefore most likely to help the kingdom of heaven to come upon earth, which is his minimum demand! He must also know that no party stands for him; that each will starve, neglect, deny or abuse him—or, worse, patronize him.

8. Both.

9. Both.

10. Of course: not serious study, but ordinary interest.

11. (*a*) It depends on your mandate. Most poets need something else to keep them from soaring off the ground altogether. Witness a certain young contemporary poet of major talent writing more and more about less and less, for want of a job to keep him with us. To reconcile the poet's face with routine's face is the problem. The poet is free, therefore his face seldom fits, and that counts for more than mere ability in routine jobs. But there are the occasional prodigies. (*b*) 'Divorced'; but this is personal. I would do four hours manual labour, if I could live on it, if I could have four only, daily.

12. That of the executive and managerial group. They should have a special dispensation *re* cultural events.

CHARLES HAMBLETT

1. Sensuality enriched by conditions of asceticism.
2. Creation, like coitus, ignores domestic status.
3. Poets contain many ingredients, but some solitude is prescribed if their talent is to remain healthy and whole.
4. Depends on poet's own mental ratio; he must be accessible to all types, but not at all times.
5. He should certainly attempt to understand the pastimes of the masses, just as he is fascinated by the perversions of the exclusive and the complicated.
6. A poet who isn't tough doesn't last long, but heaven preserve him from becoming an intolerant thug.
7. Strictly according to his poetic range.
8. No matter, providing he does what he wants.
9. Of all places, the town is best until the poet is ready for retirement. Unless he is congenitally acclimatized to bulls and berries.
10. Why not? Providing he's sufficiently accomplished in his own practice not to be influenced or distracted by other performers in the public arena.
11. Yes, unless you are a member of the parasitic classes.
12. Highest obtainable.
13. Wot, no religion!

ET CIE

1. The ascetic—poetry being largely a compensation for things that failed to get embodied. Mr. Cyril Connelly is continually writing about how nice and good for him it would be if he could go and live by the Mediterranean for a while. And so it would be. But that sun and sea are more potent of poetry when held in the mind's telescope than when reflected in the mere eyes, however in fact they might flatter and delight the senses. Most poets are sensualists by nature, but with appetites nature can't satisfy, and from this disability is forced the fact that the fullest and keenest pleasures lie not in participation but in perception. The pastoral poets write from town; and if any in Elizium writes he does so from the suburbs of heaven. For a poet the 'way of rejection' is 'the way of acceptance.'

ANONYMOUS

2. It depends upon what you mean by 'married'. If you merely mean living together, well, yes.

JOHN WALLER

3. The whole man needs solitude. He also needs the company of his fellows.

MAURICE CARPENTER

4. I prefer the company of intellectuals capable of being ordinary minded.

ERNST SIGLER

5. A great writer has said 'Never breathe an immoral atmosphere, unless in the attempt to purify it.' Not only poets, but any reasonable being, must wonder at the time spent by immortal souls on billiards, darts, and four-ale bars. The degradation of healthy sports like boxing and football to mere gambling targets, and the surrounding of the real art of the music-hall by every kind of vice. Whether a poet should make attempts at participation depends entirely on the individual; a muscular and jolly poet may have friends among 'the masses' who take him to various entertainments, and in seeing their pleasure he may discover a hitherto unknown mental bent in them.

BASIL SURREY

6. He shouldn't cultivate either. He should be himself.

HARRIMAN SCOTT

7. Let him, by preference, be bloody-minded. That he should be well acquainted with the meaning and significance of man's political behaviour is essential to his rôle as an 'unacknowledged legislator'; but his mind should be so far above the levels of political practice that this question should not even arise.

J. T. BROCKWAY

8. I do not know what a poet's leisure is. If his life's work is poetry, and leisure is a suspension of one's life's work for a time, then no such thing as a poet's leisure exists. He is a poet, making poetry, even though the process is not conscious, every moment he is alive. If poetry making is merely a pastime, then he is no true poet. If by leisure is meant the time during which he is not consciously creating, then I would answer: if he is adult, he should know exactly how much outdoor and how much indoor relaxation his mind and body require and make a sensible balance accordingly.

J. T. BROCKWAY

9. The town. Away from cities I drown.

JOHN WALLER

10. Most decidedly. All my reading teaches me that there is a great link between music and poetry and between the artist and the poet. I thank my father that he used to pull me out of bed to 'practise' music when I was eight years old. The lives of our poets, composers, painters are full of references to their early struggles in creative work which reveal the common link. I do not think there is half enough blending of the efforts of the workers in the various groups.

A. S. UMPLEBY

11. Since there is no general rule, I will speak about myself. I teach during the daytime and study economics in the evening. This leaves only an occasional midnight hour for reading and writing poetry. I should like more time for poetry (it seems as if I could use an infinite length of time on it), but the experience of my other two occupations is invaluable, and perhaps they form a necessary discipline at this early stage of my development.

A. E. DOWSON

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